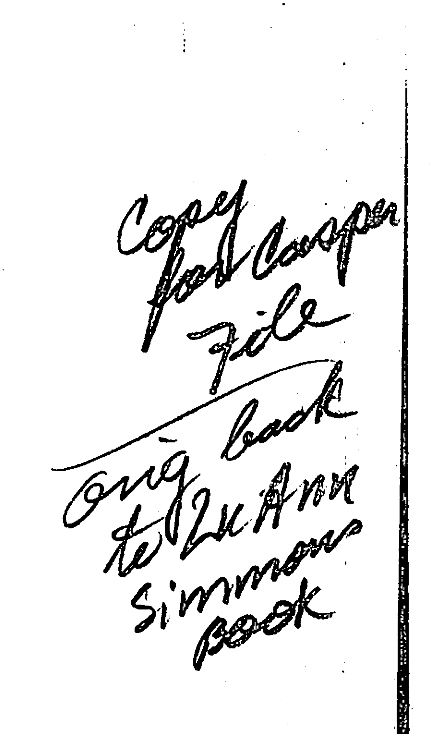
FAMILY HISTORY

HISTORY OF GEORGE EDWARD SIMMONS

George Edward Simmons, son of John Simmons and Martha Brayser, was born January 19, 1828 at Clayton, Sussex, England. He was the third child of a family of ten. George Edward wrote in his journal that he didn't know his grandfather, but he was a tall dark complexioned man. He married a Danish woman who was short and had red hair. At the age of 21 he married Charity Waller on the 11 December 1849. She was the daughter of Henry Waller and Amelia Mitchell. Eleven sons and daughters were born to them. Their names were: Elizabeth, Fannie, Joseph, Jessie, Sarah Ann, Ellen, Charity, George William, Mary Jane, Harriet and Caroline. Fannie, Harriet and Caroline died in infancy. The family lived at Hayward Heath Parish, a small market town with a railroad station, 13 miles north of Brighton, and 38 miles south of London. The largest cattle sale in Sussex washeld there. George Edward took care of horses and worked for one man sixteen years. They fed the horses scientifically. The hay was chopped and weighed and also the grain. When the horses weren't working so much George Edward would feed them about one half of their ration and store the rest in a secret bin. When the work came on he would feed them more and his horses could work more and looked better than the other fellows horses and they wondered why.

George and Charity joined the church and were baptized on September 19, 1852. He organized a branch of the church at Bugeshill and presided over it for a long time. He was president of the Brighton Branch in 1873. He had a friend who played a coronet. He taught George Edwards son George to play. They would stand on street corners and play their instruments and sing.. When a crowd gathered, George Edward would take over and preach the gospel. On some Sundays he would walk thirty miles to attend his meetings. Charity was a beautiful singer. She died August 1, 1874, leaving her eight children. George did extra work trying t to get money to take his family to Utah. He made a machine to chop hay into chaff or chopped hay for the farmers to feed to their horses. He fed the hay into the machine with his left hand while he chopped with a long knife which he worked with his right hand. It was a long and difficult undertaking to prepare to bring his large family to Utah. On 28 December 1874 he married Dora Turner. She was the daughter of Benjamin Turner and Elizabeth Cox. She and her parents were members pf tje Church of Jesus Xhrist of Latter Day Saints, from Lewis, Sussex, England. Their first child Rose was born at Brighton, Sussex, England. When she was 10 months old, the family immigrated to the United States in 1876. They came over on the ship Idaho. From the first family the following children came: Elizabeth, Joseph, Ellen, Charity, George William, and Mary Jane. They stayed in Salt Lake City, Utah two weeks and went to Charleston, Utah. Farming and horse training was George Edwards trade. His desire was to get a homestead of 160 acres on the lower of Charleston, Utah. He was unable to obtain $50.00 for the down payment. He offered a mortgage on it, but was told it wasn't worth it, and was unable to secure it. The family moved to Bountiful Utah when Joseph Benjamin was six weeks old. They had bad luck there, their precious crops were flooded and they lost them. The family then returned to Charleston, Utah and homesteaded the place the Simmons family always lived on. It was very hard to get the $12.00 to secure the down payment for that homestead. George Smith, a brother in law, had a sick cow he wanted someone to kill. George Edward hooked it on a harrow and pulled it home, got it on its feet, put its legs in a sling and cared for it and made it well. He later sold the cow and secured the homestead.

George Edward was a good gardner. His rows were straight and not a weed in them. He liked to experiment with new plants and seeds. He had an experimental garden, growing different kinds of things, even peanuts. Later he grew seed peas and sold


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(2) George Edward Simmons

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to dealers in Salt Lake City, Utah. In farming he was very exact. His rows had to be straight and peffectly in line. No one could work for him that couldn't plow a perfectly straight row. While living in Charleston, Utah, he needed milk for his family but he couldn't afford to buy a cow. William Bagley, a very good friend, loaned him a cow. Each year he raised the cows calf until it was big enough to ween, and it was given to Mr. Bagley. This paid for the loaning of the cow. Later he was able to get a cow of his own and he gave William Bagley his cow back.

When George Edward was about 60 years of age, he went to Lake Creek to get a load of wood. They took two teams and wagons. His sons George and Joseph went with him. Coming down the canyon the brake broke and let the load go into the horses. The horses couldn't hold the load and started to run. George Edward was thrown off. The wagon ran over him, hurting his back badly. He was sick for a long time. Bertha and Stephen taught him to walk by pushing his legs. His family had faith that thier father would be made well. They would kneel about his bed every night and pray that he would be made well. Mother used to say, "Father won't die because his family won't let him." In his later life he became quite crippled and Stephen used to sleep on the floor by his side so he could help him turn over during the night. One morning he said, "It has been made known to me that I shall live about fifteen more years." He did live about that long.

George Edward had white curley hair and a beautiful white curley beard. When mother trimmed hair and beard, some of the children would stand guard to make sure she didn't cut it too short. They were very proud of their father. He was a very religious man and no matter how busy he was he stopped work to go to priesthood and fast meetings. He was a humble man and would rather be mistreated than mistreat someone else. Stories have been told of his gift of healing, of how he raised a girl from the dead and how an evil spirit was cast out of a young man. In 1901 he told his family that Jessie his son by his first marriage, who had stayed in England was dead. The family did not pay much attention to him for he was quite feeble. But a short time later word came from England of Jessie's death. When they told him he said, "I know he came to me and bid me good-bye."

In 1954, Fern Coon made a count of the decendents of George Edward Simmons. There was about 620. George Edward had a religious quality that has been instilled in his large family., most of whom are in the church and active.

Joseph Simmons, George Edwards son from his first marriage was a stone polisher and he did a lot of work on the Brigham Young Monument and the stone work of the Salt Lake Temple. He was also a good musician and played in a band for several years. It was while working on the Brigham Young Monument that he became critically ill from a sun stroke. He never did get well from this stroke and died a few months later. His son George from his first marriage was a fine artist and did a lot of beautiful painting He was also a good musician. George Edwards sister, Mary Edwards came to Utah.